

SC062651

Registered provider: Care Focus Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home provides care for four children who present with high-risk behaviours. The aim of the home is to provide a safe, homely and nurturing environment in which the children can start to make positive choices and reduce risk-taking behaviours.

The manager has been registered at this home since September 2019.

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 March 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 14 June 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/06/2018	Full	Good
25/10/2017	Full	Good
11/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
31/05/2016	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This home makes a positive difference to the children's lives. The children have progressed academically and have greater engagement in their education than before they moved to the home. Children who have either not attended education or had sporadic school attendance now attend school regularly and work towards GCSEs.

Good-quality, trusting relationships contribute to the family-style environment at this home. Warm and nurturing interactions between the staff and the children were observed during the inspection. The staff enable the children to explore their emotions and anxieties so that they can understand the links between how they are feeling and how they behave.

The children are supported to become more independent, when it is safe to do so. The staff work with the children on a pathway to independence. The children are exposed to independence work slowly, due to the nature of the children's historic risks.

The children's mental and physical health improves because they live at this home. The staff support the children to access appointments that they were previously afraid or not supported to attend, prior to living at this home. This has led to children receiving the dental care that they require and catching up with vaccinations that they have missed.

The staff are good at exploring the children's views. They hold regular children's house meetings to discuss a broad range of matters that are important to the children. This enhances the children's overall experience of living at the home. The staff routinely have high-quality individual discussions with the children and act on their requests. The staff ensure that children remain informed when their wishes and requests cannot be met.

Each child has a memory box that the staff add treasured memories to throughout the children's time at the home. This provides the children with a physical reminder of the times and experiences that they have shared with the staff and other children while at the home. When a child leaves the home, the staff plant a rose bush in the garden to remember the child. These thoughtful working practices give the children a sense of belonging.

The children's bedrooms are personalised in line with their likes and preferences. However, two of the children's bedrooms do not have handles fitted to the windows. Therefore, the children cannot open the windows without requesting the handles from staff. The children should not have to seek staff to request that they open a window in their room. One of the toilet areas requires redecoration, as it detracts from the otherwise homely environment.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

The staff support the children to reduce their risk-taking behaviours and make safer choices. Children do not go missing on a regular basis and, when they do go missing, the staff work proactively to ensure their safe return.

Restraint is used when it is justified and necessary. Restraint records are very detailed, giving a clear picture of the sequence of events. The manager reviews the records of every incident of restraint. These reviews are insightful and, to avoid any recurrence of challenging behaviour, lead to changes in the support that the children receive.

Staff understand the risks that children face and have clear plans to manage risk. Children's records reflect the progress that they make. The staff work exceptionally well to provide tailored support to children who are at particularly high risk of harm. Children who have previously been involved in criminal activity cease this once they move to the home. The staff work collaboratively with external professionals, such as the youth offending team, to work in the children's best interests.

The children know how to complain. The manager responds to complaints in a timely manner. Children are routinely informed of the outcome of their complaints.

The staff provide the children with appropriate behavioural boundaries when they are having difficulty in adhering to the rules and expectations of the home. Staff expertly de-escalate children's challenging behaviour. If de-escalation is not effective, the staff remain calm yet assertive in their support of children in crisis.

There have been several allegations made against the staff. Investigations into allegations or suspicion of harm are shared with the appropriate agencies and are handled fairly. Outcomes are suitably recorded and revisions to practice are made in a timely manner, if and when appropriate.

The manager undertakes the assessment of fire risk on an annual basis. However, the risk assessment does not include manually closing fire doors to reduce the risk of the fire spreading.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is relatively new, being registered in 2019. She is currently undertaking the required level 5 diploma. The manager is extremely passionate about both her own professional development and the development of the home. Her practice is child-centred and she has a strong presence in the home. The manager is respected by the staff team that she proficiently leads. The manager makes herself available to the staff and the children.

The staff view supervision as integral to their role. Supervisions explore practice issues, when required, and provide guidance to the staff to ensure that they fulfil their roles effectively.

The manager undertakes regular monitoring of the children's records and outcomes. She reviews care plans to ensure that they meet the children's needs. She takes prompt action to make the necessary changes so that the staff have the most up-to-date information to guide them. The manager monitors behavioural trends and themes to understand patterns of behaviour relating to the children. This behavioural analysis enables her to target the support to address the children's needs and reduce identified risks.

The monthly reports that are provided by the independent visitor identify shortfalls which the manager acts to address. Effective monitoring processes ensure that the staff are meeting the children's needs well and that the children are receiving the service described in the statement of purpose. However, there have been two occasions when the monthly monitoring reports were not submitted to Ofsted. The manager has failed to submit the most recent copy of the home's statement of purpose to Ofsted. This does not enable Ofsted to have a clear oversight of the care being provided to children.

There have been several changes to the staff team since the last inspection. Staff induction and training in general are sufficient. However, two staff members have not achieved a relevant level 3 diploma within the timescale stated in regulation. This prevents staff from having the knowledge required to fulfil their role. However, this shortfall has not undermined the overall quality of care provided to the children.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must– keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16(3)(a)(b))	31/03/2020
If the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005(a) applies to the home– the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, except for article 23 (duties of employees), are complied with in respect of the home. (Regulation 25(2)(b)) In particular, ensure that arrangements for the safe use of fire doors feature in the fire risk assessment.	31/03/2020
For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained– the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ('the Level 3 Diploma'); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is– in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1 April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or	31/07/2020

in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1 April 2014, 1 April 2016. (Regulation 32(4)(a)(b), (5)(a)(b))	
The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to HMCI. (Regulation 44(7)(a))	31/03/2020

Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food, hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

In particular, ensure that the home is maintained and decorated to a reasonable standard.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, using the 'Social care common inspection framework'. This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC062651

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Care Focus Limited

Registered provider address: Third floor, 24 Chiswell Street, Islington, London EC1Y 4YX

Responsible individual: Jean Lloyd

Registered manager: Sarah Finch

Inspector

Lianne Bradford, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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